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ABSTRACT

The goal of this practicum was to increase school-based interventions for children of divorce in an elementary school. The school psychologist implemented two faculty workshops with 13 faculty members attending the first and 7 attending the second workshop, and 6-week developmental groups for grades one and two, three and four, and five and six, which included 17 students. All faculty and parent workshops and all student groups were followed up with questionnaires. Parent workshops involved 18 parents. The questionnaires for grades one and two were presented in an interview format. All single parents of the first/second grade group and fifth/sixth grade group reported that their children improved academically and/or behaviorally. Two of the four parents responding in the third/fourth grade group reported that their children improved academically and/or behaviorally; two parents felt their children did not need to improve academically and/or behaviorally. All students in the developmental groups reported increased communication and coping skills. The classroom faculty reported that their students who attended the groups improved academically and/or behaviorally. Most faculty members attending the two workshops and all parents attending the parent workshop reported increased awareness of strategies for promoting optional growth. (Author/ABL)

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# Increasing Elementary School Based Interventions for Children of Divorce by Utilizing Faculty and Parent Workshops and Developmental Student Groups

by

John P. Carlucci

Cluster XXI

CG 021313

A Practicum II Report Presented to the Ed.D Program
in Early and Middle Childhood
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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1988

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL

This practicum took place as described.

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This practicum report was submitted by John P. Carlucci under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D Program in Early and Middle Childhood and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

9-20-88

Date of Final Approval of Report

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Abstract

Increasing Elementary School Based Interventions for Children of Divorce by Utilizing Faculty and Parent Workshops and Developmental Student Groups. Carlucci, John P., 1988: Practicum Report, NOVA University, Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood. Descriptors: Elementary Education/ Parent Role/ Faculty Role/ Developmental Groups/ Cognitive Groups/ Parent School Relationship/ Non Public Schools/ Private Schools/ Parochial School/ One Parent Family/ Divorce/ Fatherless Family/ Motherless Family/ Faculty Development/ School Intervention/ Academic Intervention/ Social Skill Intervention.

The goal of this practicum was to increase elementary school based interventions for children of divorce. Parochial elementary school faculty and divorced single parents had neither addressed or understood the impact divorce created on a child's academic or social performance at school; thus no strategies were in place for promoting optimal academic or social success for children from divorced homes.

The school psychologist implemented two faculty workshops, three parent workshops and six week developmental groups for grades one and two, grades three and four and grades five and six. All faculty and parent workshops and all student groups were followed up with questionnaires. The questionnaires for grades one and two were presented in an interview format.

All single parents of the first/second grade group and fifth/sixth grade group reported their children improved academically and or behaviorally. Two of four parents responding in the third/fourth grade group reported their children improved academically and or behaviorally; two parents felt their children did not need to improve academically and or behaviorally. All students in the developmental groups reported increased communication and coping skills. The classroom faculty reported their students who attended the groups improved academically and or behaviorally. Eleven of the 13 faculty members who attended the first workshop and 6 of 7 faculty members who attended the second workshop reported increase awareness of strategies for promoting optimal growth. All parents in the parent workshop reported increased awareness of strategies to promote optimal growth.

# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

## Description of Community

The city utilized in this practicum is located in the Great Lakes region. The population as of 1985 was 569,730 (Columbus Public Schools, 1986). The total square mileage of the city is 185.3 square miles (Columbus Public Schools, 1986). This is a white collar, service oriented, processing information city, lacking a heavy concentration of blue collar industrial workers. Busing has been utilized in the public schools for the purpose of desegregation since the fall of 1979.

The school in this community used in this practicum is a urban non public catholic elementary school, grades first to eight inclusive. The total population of the school is approximately 250 students. Children in the

school referred to the school psychologist for consultation, counseling and evaluation encompass all grades and are referred for academic and/or social difficulties. The referrals are initiated by legal guardians, parents, mental health/community agencies, principal, teachers, school counselor and physicians.

The socioeconomic/racial structure of the school is minimally integrated because as a non public facility the school does not have to comply with federal and state desegregation mandates. The general composition of the parents and or legal guardians of the children in the school are Caucasian, upper middle class, professional families, 19% of whom are single parents.

Author's Work Setting/Role

The school psychologist conducting this practicum is a state certificated school psychologist and a state licensed professional counselor with a master of science degree in counselor education. This writer is employed by an urban public school system assigned to non public catholic elementary schools. The catholic schools are able to utilize this school psychologist through allocated state funded monies. The basic responsibility of this position is to act as an educational and mental health consultant, counseling the referred school age

children and their parents. Associated with this role is the administration and interpretation of psychological evaluations of referred students. The evaluations include intellectual, educational and/or personality assessments utilizing various standardized psychometric instruments.

As an employee of a public school system assigned to the non public services in the department of federal and state programs, the work site for a psychologist according to the Columbus Public Schools (1986) is not in the non public school building or property. Except for diagnosing, which is permissible in the building, the work site is a 25 foot mobile classroom, stationed on public property as close as possible to the non public school building. Principals, parents, legal guardians, teachers, school counselors and students have conferences with the school psychologist in the mobile unit.

# CHAPTER 2

# STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

## Problem Description

Children of divorced single parent homes are referred to the school psychologist for consultation, academic/social intervention strategies and psychoeducational evaluation. The referrals are initiated by single parents, principal, teachers, physicians, school counselor, mental health/community agencies and legal guardians.

Upon receipt of a referral, the school psychologist consults with the initiator. Information concerning the specifics of the problem, duration of the difficulty, strategies already utilized by the faculty and single parents are obtained. A decision is then made with this input on the best route to aid the child.

If evaluation is the chosen route in helping the child, the school psychologist personally notifies the single parent by phone. The situation at school is

explained and input is obtained from the parent, then an appointment is arranged at a mutually agreed upon time. The appointment is held at the school, during the school day, between the school psychologist and single parent. The conference is approximately one hour. At this time a developmental and family history is obtained and the problem at school is updated and reviewed. The school psychologist then begins the psychoeducational evaluation of the child.

The student is observed in the classroom for approximately 15 minutes. The student is removed from the class and the school psychologist begins the psychometric section of the evaluation. The evaluation is completed, interpreted and written. The school psychologist notifies the single parent by mail that the evaluation is completed and an appointment is arranged to review the report. Present at this meeting is the school psychologist, principal, teacher and parent. The evaluation report with recommendations and possible handouts with remediation strategies are presented. The minimum time allowed for this meeting is one hour. A copy of the evaluation is presented to the single parent and placed in the school file.

Difficulties encountered after this meeting were that the single parent's child's problem(s) which

originally initiated the evaluation remained unchanged. Minimal if any observable change occurred. Possible reasons why the problem(s) had not been solved could be:

1. The divorced single parent denies the problem. If the single parent feels no problem exists, no improvement in the child's behavior is warranted.

2. A poor family/school relationship exists. The family may feel this is the school's attempt to cause friction within the family. Therefore, the single parent rallies against the school by not implementing change in the child.

3. The single parent and or faculty lack educational information concerning the impact divorce creates on a child's school performance. Not understanding the problem, the single parent and faculty do not pursue a positive route of change.

4. The student is preoccupied with family disruption. If the child is preoccupied with the home, school performance becomes a low priority if any at all.

Concisely stated, the problem is parochial elementary school faculty and divorced single parents do not address the impact divorce creates on the child's academic and or social performance at school.

Problem Documentation

Documentation of this problem is evidenced in four ways:

1. By researching and comparing school records, the school psychologist determined who lived in a divorced single parent household. Nineteen percent of the students resided in divorced single parent homes. This percentage represented 48 students of the total 250 student population. In a classroom of 30 students approximately six lived in a divorced single parent home.

2. Based upon an analysis of the evaluations conducted by the school psychologist in the 1986-1987 school year, twelve students were evaluated; nine lived in a divorced single parent home. Children from single parent homes were evaluated three times as often as students from two parent homes.

3. The school principal verbally requested from the school psychologist and or school counselor a program for divorced families in the school. Both single parents and remarried divorced parents during the 1986 -1987 school year expressed their concerns to the principal that their family needs were not being met. Some of their concerns were: Times for parent/faculty meetings; time and type of school functions, such as,

father and daughter dances, father and son night; perceived feelings that their family was different since two parents did not live in the same household, or mommy and the children have two different last names; and, the feeling that the faculty did not tune into the crisis the child was experiencing, in coping with the divorce.

4. The school psychologist compared the academic updates conducted by the school psychologist in the Spring of 1987 with the academic results of the psychological evaluation. A summary of the total academic and social skill recommendations made by the school psychologist for students living in divorced single parent homes and for children of two parent homes and the recommendations implemented by the divorced single parents and faculty are shown in Table 1 and Table 2. The results in tables 1 and 2 were compiled at the end of the school year by reviewing the recommendations made with the teachers and telephoning the parents.

Table 1

Academic and Social Skill Recommendations by School Psychologist for Single Parent Children Implemented by Divorced Single Parent or Faculty

| Skill | School Psychologist Recommendations | DSP/F Implemented |
|---|---|---|
| Academics | 22 | 10 |
| Social | 14 | 2 |

Note. DSP/F = Divorced Single Parent or Faculty.

Table 2

Academic and Social Skill Recommendations by School Psychologist for Children of Two Parent Homes Implemented by Parents or Faculty

| Skill | School Psychologist Recommendations | Parents or Faculty Implemented |
|---|---|---|
| Academic | 8 | 6 |
| Social | 5 | 3 |

Causative Analysis

Probable causes of this problem in this author's work setting are presented in four different aspects:

1. The poor relationship existing between the home and school.

2. The general problems single parents' have themselves.

3. The school faculty lacking educational information, such as, the effects the divorce creates on the child's academic and social relationships.

4. General problems children of divorced single parents experience understanding divorce.

The first factor is the poor relationship between the home and school. Schools in general tend to believe parents are not involved in their children's education. Parents feel the school in general misinforms them about their child. The school threatens their parenting skills, when they are already overwhelmed by sundry internal and external stresses, by pressuring them for a psychological evaluation of their child. In general such misperceptions result in the home and school not cooperating, understanding and trusting each other. Therefore, they work at cross purposes with biased negative feelings toward each other. Parents and schools working against each other results in the child

being directed in two opposite directions, receiving no help and an increased negative attitude for each other (Kelly, Beals, Dettre, Van Vactor, Wagonseller and Simpson, 1980; Drake and Shellenberger, 1981).

The second aspect relates to the general problems divorced single parents have themselves. Lapides (1977) discusses parents, particularly divorced single parents, experiencing symptoms of stress, high levels of anxiety, feelings of apprehensiveness with a desire to escape from the conference with the psychologist and a desire to escape from making difficult choices. Therefore, the divorced single parent does not process all the information presented and decides to look for a new supply of information, new alternatives, second and third opinions. This shopping around by the parents results in procrastination by the parents and ultimately the child receiving no help at all.

Divorced single parents' are anxious when they meet professionals to discuss the problem(s) their child is experiencing in school, because they now tend to blame themselves and the divorce as the causes. This anxiety tends to result in the parent finding it more difficult to assimilate any information. Therefore, they become aware of how they are misunderstanding what is being said to them, and the child receives the wrong help or

no help ("Please Test Our Son", 1983).

The third probable cause of this problem is the school faculty lacking educational information on the impact of divorce on the child's school performance. School personnel have noticed the symptoms exhibited by the children of divorce: shock, depression, anger, shame, fear and insecurity. They have witnessed concrete behavioral manifestations of these symptoms; poor concentration, outbursts, fighting, withdrawal and inferior schoolwork (Sonnensheim-Schneider, 1980). Although the elementary school faculty are aware of the symptoms and perceive a need to deal with children of divorce, they often lack a workable understanding of the process and techniques required in helping such children.

In relation to the fourth aspect of the general problems children of divorced parents experience understanding divorce, Hodges and Bloom (1984) discuss children living with one parent have undergone stress from external conditions and internal feelings. The children face major changes living with one parent which often cause stress. They have to learn to deal with more supervision by baby-sitters, less income and new rules. Stress is further created by a lack of information and comprehension concerning the divorce.

Both developmentally and cognitively the children are less prepared to comprehend their thoughts and feelings as they see their parents separate. Such high degrees of stress almost certainly affect children's behavior and ability to perform in the classroom.

## Related Literature

The literature reviewed has shown different perspectives of this problem. Examples of such perspectives are: (a) general information concerning divorce in the United States, (b) the effects of divorce on parents, (c) the potential role of the school in helping the child, and (d) the effects of divorce on children.

The general information in the literature supports the fact that an inordinate number of American school age children have, are and will experience the trauma associated with divorce. According to Clay (1980) the divorce rate has nearly tripled since 1963. As of 1978, 18.5% of all children under the age of 18 years live with one parent. Divorced one parent families in the United States constitute 15% of all families. Children are likely to live in one parent families for an average

of five years (Schlesinger, 1982). According to Clay (1980) almost half of the children born in 1979 will have lived in a divorced single parent home by their 18th birthday. As of 1981 a fourth of all marriages ended in divorce. Few children's lives are untouched by divorce. Divorce surrounds them.

Pedro-Carroll (1984) estimated as of 1983 at least one million children experience parental divorce annually. The stressful nature of that experience increases the likelihood of adverse effects on their psychological well being. The results of Wallerstein and Kelly's (1980) 10 year longitudinal study of children of divorce from middle class families are: (a) fifty percent were adjusting marginally, (b) twenty-five percent still had serious problems, and (c) twenty-five percent were adjusting satisfactorily. According to Wallerstein (1983), after 10 years the feelings of sadness, regret and of being different remained as did concern about the permanence of interpersonal relationships and risks involved in one's own future marriage. Guidubaldi, Cleminshaw, Perry and Mcloughlin (1983) discussed that children of divorce consistently did less well on teacher rated adjustment measures of skill development, school attendance and performance, popularity with peers and locus of control.

Divorce is a major stressful, painful transition. This is so even when divorce was the best solution to irreconcilable differences in a marriage.

The effects on divorced parents show that the difficulty people experience varies. Not everyone experiences hostility and disorganization, but divorce is a traumatic experience for the majority of parents. Reactions can depend upon economic circumstances, presence and ages of children and who has custody of them, the nature of the marriage relationship before separation and on others. The actual experience of divorce is often much worse than expected. New stresses and troubled feelings are born and many endure even greater suffering because they anticipated the divorce as an instant cure (McCall and Stocking, 1980).

Heatherington (1979) reports that women after the divorce feel anxious, angry, depressed, guilty and rejected. Many feel they had caused the biggest failure of their lives, shattering their self-esteem. They further experience intense feelings of loneliness, emptiness and hollowness.

Most couples feel worse a year after the divorce than during the first few months. The stark realities of single parenting and continued loneliness set in. Single custodial parents, whether men or women, must now

perform tasks two parents had. With a full-time job added to the household responsibilities, parents become overloaded and live on the edge. At the end of one year, 73% of the women and 60% of the men think the divorce might have been a mistake (Heatherington, 1979).

According to Grossman and Adams (1980) divorce is an undesirable and psychologically conflicting occurrence. Divorce is a stressor which precipitates the appearance of negative or undesirable consequences for family members. Divorce often results in domestic disorganization. Single parent households are less likely to eat dinner together; bedtimes are erratic; the children are read to less before going to sleep; and the children tend to arrive late at school.

Single parent mothers tend to have more conflict with their sons. The conflict results in the boys becoming more negative, aggressive and disobedient. This in turns causes mom to use more commands, more punishments, inconsistent discipline and often very little praise. The mother struggling with feeling inadequate and incompetent looks at her problem son and feels more helpless; useless in not being able to aptly parent which in turns accelerates the coercive behavior of the child (Heatherington, 1979; Lazurus,1980).

McCall et al. (1980) grouped into six concepts the events divorced single parents experience singularly or in conjunction with each other over an extended period of time. The six are:

1. Emotional divorce, centering around the deteriorating marriage.

2. The economic divorce dealing with money and property.

3. Community divorce surrounding the changes of friends and community.

4. Legal divorce based on grounds.

5. The coparental divorce which deals with custody, single parent homes, visitation.

6. The psychic divorce centering on regaining individual autonomy.

Research demonstrates divorced single parents need help in learning that their child has also experienced a trauma in the divorce which is just as stressful to them as it is to the parents. The single parents need to learn what their children are thinking, perceiving and feeling. Often parents have no clue at all what their child believes because of their own struggle to survive. Single parents can help their children through this period by attempting to follow eight suggestions:

1. Re-focus and listen to the child.

2. Be truthful with the children without overburdening them with details of the divorce.

3. Communicate with your ex spouse that the children should not be used as messengers.

4. Allow the children to be children not small adults.

5. Children are not counselors; seek professional help.

6. Try to be neither over or underprotective with the child.

7. Promise children only those things which you can fulfill.

8. Identify and express your own and children's feelings (Magid, 1977). These suggestions can ease the transition of divorce for the family resulting in less stress for the child. Furthermore, this enables the youngster to be a child and fulfills his responsibility of attending to school.

The potential role of the school is the third concept. The literature shows that the school and the faculty are the prime environment to help promote optimal growth for children of divorced single parent homes. The school is where the child spends more time than in any other institution outside of the family. Drake and Shellenberger (1981) discuss that the school

psychologist as an expert in human behavior can help school personnel learn to cope with the effects of divorce on their students. This can be accomplished by utilizing an indirect/preventive approach to enhance individual, family or school functioning. Education and or training programs are offered by the school psychologist to teachers, administrators, counselors and school nurses. The programs promote increased sensitivity to the needs of children of divorce by school personnel. The preventive approach helps the faculty in learning to aid their students in dealing with inevitable family changes, since stress brought about by family change seriously impacts children's lives.

Classroom teachers can also play a pivotal role in facilitating the child's adjustment to divorce. Vogler (1981) and Skeen and McKerney (1980) discussed typical reactions of single parent children in school and the types of responses teachers could give which would benefit the students. Children in kindergarten and first grade may experience such symptoms as heightened anxiety, aggression, restlessness, whininess, irritability, separation problems and moodiness. The teacher can respond with more active listening; engage in fantasy play such as puppets and dolls to work

through divorce events and utilize concrete materials for hands on activities. Second and third grade children may display feelings of deprivation, fear, sadness, grieving and anger. The classroom teacher's response can be active listening; provide outlets for the anger; and provide structure and security. Divorced single parent children's reactions in fourth and fifth grade may be an effort to manage, high activity level, avoidance, fear of abandonment, shaken sense of identity and physical complaints. Their teacher could respond by active listening, schedule group activities such as crafts, games and book discussions,and have children listen to each other and share information.

According to Clay (1980), if the educational setting is to meet the needs of children of divorce they need to recognize and meet the needs and concerns of the single parents. If schools want to involve parents in activities they need to schedule events when parents can attend. Convenient scheduling is necessary to make school involvement accessible to single parents. Single parents have concerns about school personnel's attitudes. Attitudes can come out in language when terms such as "broken homes", "not normal" are used to refer to divorced families. Personal feelings and values need to be examined. They can unconsciously or

consciously affect the way a teacher interacts with both the child and the parent (Skeen et al., 1980).

In relation to the fourth aspect of the effects of divorce on children there is ample evidence that the divorce of parents has adverse consequences on child development. Children appear to respond differently to the divorce of their parents according to their developmental age and sex (Heatherington, Cox and Cox, 1979; Heatherington, 1979; Drake, 1979; Wallerstein et al., 1980; Grossman et al.,1980; and Hodges and Bloom, 1984).

General developmental characteristics of five and six year olds, according to Vogler (1981) are ego centrism, concrete thinking, global approach and they respond more to actions than words. The children in this age range commonly react to divorce with denial, acute unhappiness, feelings of rejection, difficulty with academics and social learning, such as distractibility and poor peer relations.

Developmental characteristics of seven, eight and nine year olds includes a greater verbal ability but still requiring a fairly concrete approach (Vogler, 1981). According to McCall et al. (1979) and Schlesinger (1982) children in this age range express feelings of sadness and loss, fear and insecurity. They

felt abandoned and rejected, although they do not blame themselves for the divorce. They have difficulty in expressing their anger towards their fathers. They feel angry at their mothers for sending their fathers away but are afraid of incurring their mothers wrath.

McCall et al. (1979) describe 10, 11 and 12 year old developmental characteristics as peer orientation, productivity, rule bound, and more complete verbal conceptualizations. This age group possesses a more realistic concept of divorce and are better able to express their intense feelings of anger. They do not feel responsible for the divorce but are ashamed and morally outraged by their parents' behavior. Their loyalties are divided between their parents and they often feel lonely and rejected (Schlesinger, 1982).

Fulton (1979) discussed sex differences in reaction to parents divorcing. Boys between the ages of 7-11 years respond with anxiety, fears, shaken identity, loneliness, somatic complaints and more aggression toward peers. Girls of the same age range typically only react with anxiety and depression. In general boys have more difficulties than girls after a divorce. Possibly boys experience more problems because society expects them to be more self-sufficient, emotionally controlled, independent and able to cope

with emergencies without help. Therefore, parents, teachers and peers give boys less support, less encouragement and more criticism. They are supposed to deal with these issues by themselves (McCall et al., 1979).

Children of single parents while dealing with the emotional side effects of divorce watch their academic achievement drop. Single parent children generally tend to perform as much as .8 to 1.6 grade levels below children from two parent homes. When children are under stress, without external controls and living in an unstructured environment they do not learn the kind of self control that is critical for problem solving (McCall et al., 1979).

The reviewed literature discussed that divorced one parent families constitute 15% of all families in the United States. The effects of divorce on parents vary, but for the majority of parents it is a very traumatic experience. The school is the environment where the child spends more time than in any institution other than the family. Therefore, the school can and must play a pivotal role in aiding children of divorce reach their optimal growth. The difficulties children of divorce experience vary with their age and sex. Irregardless of this, the children suffer. Information

in the literature pertaining to the rate of divorce; the effects of divorce on parents; and the potential role of the school in helping both the children and parents did not exist as it relates to the Roman Catholic family or non public, Catholic elementary school. Furthermore, literature on the effects of divorce on children did not exist as it relates to the Roman Catholic family.

# Chapter 3

## ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

### Statement of General Goals

The goals of this practicum were to have the school faculty and single parents address, understand and possess strategies for implementation in promoting optimal academic and social success for children from divorced homes.

### Behavioral Expectations

Five objectives of this practicum were;

1. Seventy percent of the single parents of each group report their children improved academically or behaviorally.

2. Students in each developmental group report increased communication and coping skills.

3. Classroom faculty report their group participants improved academically or behaviorally.

4. The faculty report increased awareness of strategies in promoting optimal growth for single parent children.

5. Parents in attendance at the workshop report increased awareness of strategies for promoting optimal growth for single parent children.

Evaluation Instruments

Five instruments were used to measure the objectives. They were: 1. a written faculty workshop opinion questionnaire (FWOQ); 2. a written parent workshop opinion questionnaire (PWOQ); 3. a written student group opinion questionnaire (SOQ) for grades three to six inclusive: grades one and two will have a group discussion centered around the SOQ; 4. post group faculty opinion questionnaire (PGFOQ); 5. post group parent opinion questionnaire (PGPOQ).

The PGFOQ and the PGPOQ each have a total of six questions with instructions to the faculty and parents to check the answer which best describes their feelings. All PGPOQ questions are responded with a yes or no. Five of the PGFOQ questions are responded with a yes or no. One question is a fill in the blank with how many

students improved academically and behaviorally. The six questions basically deal with whether the child improved at all. A space is provided at the bottom of the questionnaire for the faculty and parents to add comments which they feel were not addressed by the questionnaire. (see appendix A & B). A personal cover letter is attached explaining and stressing the importance of returning the questionnaire and requesting the faculty and parents to return the questionnaire within a specified time. (see appendix C).

The SOQ has a total of 1Ø questions with instructions to the students to check the answer which best describes their feelings. All questions are responded with a yes or no. One question has two sections to complete. The second section for the question is a fill in the blank with the number of books read. Also one question is a fill in the blank with the number of sessions attended. Two questions deal with the behavior of the school psychologist and eight deal with the behavior of the students. A space is provided on the bottom of the questionnaire for the students to add comments which they feel are not addressed by the questionnaire. (see appendix D).

The FWOQ and the PWOQ has a total of seven questions with instructions to the faculty and parents

to check the answer which best describes their feelings. Seven questions are responded with a yes or no. One question was a fill in the blank of how many workshops attended. The seven questions deal with the behavior of the faculty and parent. A space is provided on the bottom of the questionnaire for the faculty and parents to add comments which they feel are not addressed by the questionnaire. (see appendix E & F).

Analysis

The data from objectives two, three, four and five were analyzed in relation to the positive responses of the questionnaire, with a discussion of the negative responses. Objective one was analyzed in terms of percentages. The objectives were considered achieved by the self reporting of the faculty, parents and students. Objective four was considered achieved when the final percentage equals or exceeds the specified percentage. The data are presented in tables.

# Chapter 4

## SOLUTION STRATEGY

### Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

The literature reports different approaches the school psychologist can utilize in increasing the awareness and understanding of school faculty and divorced single parents of the effects of divorce on children. Strategies to help the child cope are also cited in the literature. Examples of such approaches are:

1. In school preventive group program with the school psychologist for all students dealing with family change.

2. The school psychologist setting up in school support groups specifically for children from divorced single parent homes.

3. The school psychologist setting up in school educational family change groups for all children.

According to Drake et al. (1981) separation and divorce affect how children behave and learn in school. School psychologists, as experts in human behavior can readily employ in the schools a preventive approach to deal with the effects of divorce and separation. The preventive approach is a group program for all children to learn to deal with family changes, not exclusively divorce and or separation but with births, deaths and other natural events. An example of the preventive approach is the children meet for five sessions on consecutive days. The objective of the first session is to increase awareness of the different family structures in which children live. In the second session the children explore by role playing methods of coping with family change. Session three is developing awareness of the unavoidability of family conflict. Fourth, students identify and express feelings. Session five is to examine family structures and coping mechanisms.

Solutions presented by Drake et al. (1981) and Holdahl et al. (1977) suggest in school family change groups for all students. Family change groups is a good concept but not practical in this setting as presented. The school psychologist is only at the school on a

weekly basis, therefore five family change sessions would occur over a five week span, not on five consecutive days. The school psychologist's roll at the school is multifaceted involving consultation, psychoeducational evaluations, liaison to mental health facilities and counselling. To offer family change counselling for all student on a weekly basis would consume most of the work day. Therefore, all the other needs of the school would be neglected. Furthermore, Drake et al. (1981) Holdahl et al. (1977) did not demonstrate conclusive results that the groups are beneficial over an extended period of time.

Bowker (1982) in relation to the second aspect suggests the school psychologist facilitate in school support groups for children from divorced single parent households. The students are referred to the group by teachers because of poor academic progress and marked changes in behavior and by parents seeking support for their youngsters. The group has four objectives:

1. Increase personal understanding of the issues of divorce.

2. Increase ability to identify and express personnel feelings.

3. Increased opportunity for sharing specific situations at home.

4. Increased skills in finding realistic solutions to problems. The short term goal of the group is to enable each child to share personnel experiences of living through this crisis. The long term goal is to raise school achievement and improve school behavior. At the end of the sessions classroom teachers and parents noted a rise in grades and less behavior problems. The children involved cited feeling better about themselves and family life.

Bowker (1982) suggested in school support groups for children of divorce. This is a good concept, but as presented would not work with this population. Students are simultaneously referred to the group by both teachers and parents. Often teachers' perceptions of the students problems are not always the same as the parents, therefore, resulting in non-referral of the child to the group. Often parents refuse permission for their child to participate in the group due to a poor relationship with the school and denial of the problem (Kelly et al. 1980). Therefore, the school psychologist has two separate lists with two agendas working at cross purposes resulting in no one receiving appropriate help. Furthermore, provisions were not made for the different developmental and cognitive levels of the children. First graders require a different format than fifth

graders even though both are working through the same event.

According to Holdahl and Caspersen (1977) the school psychologist can form family change groups in the schools. The school is chosen as the setting because the child spends more time there than in any other institution outside the family. This is a program for all children to understand and cope with change in general and specifically family change. The program is called family change classes, not group counseling. The classes are educational in nature with a consideration of the child's developmental needs. The program is supportive and directed to family change. It is based on a social problem solving model where children identify needs, personalize the needs, integrate, apply and practice them.

Bowker (1982), utilizing in school support groups lead by the school psychologist, found increased self-esteem as cited by the group members; classroom teachers and parents reporting improved grades, fewer behavior problems and improved relationships. The literature reviewed as Drake et al. (1981) and Holdahl et al. (1977) presented theories without conclusive statistical results showing that the children involved increased their strategies in coping with single parent

households.

Another possible solution strategy would be for the school psychologist to conduct two in school faculty workshops, two in school parent workshops and in school developmental groups for single parent children. The workshops for the faculty and school parents would deal with the affects of divorce on elementary school age children. The developmental groups for children of single parent homes would involve six sessions during six consecutive weeks dealing with learning about and coping with divorce. Follow-up questionnaires would be presented after each faculty and parent workshop, to each student of the group and to the faculty and parents of students who participated in the group. The school psychologist would be available for assistance at the faculty's, parents' and students' requests.

## Solution Selected

It was felt that the most appropriate solution strategy for this population, work setting and goals was: the school psychologist designing and conducting two faculty and two parent workshops; (see appendix G, H, I, J and K), and six week developmental groups for grades one and two, (see appendices L thru Z inclusive), grades three and four, and grades five and six (Rivers,

1981; Sonnlenshlin-Schneider, 1980; Bradford, 1982; Kalter, Pickar, Lesowitz, 1984; Hodges, 1986). Both faculty and parent workshops were followed up with questionnaires and all students in the groups and their teachers and parents were presented with follow-up questionnaires. This solution was projected to work for various reasons:

1. One person, the school psychologist worked with the faculty, parents and students for the entire time period.

2. The workshops and appropriate handouts were explained in detail and in easily understood language.

3. The student divorce groups were structured on a developmental/cognitive level.

4. This author was available for assistance to the faculty, parents and students the entire school year.

5. A follow-up questionnaire after the faculty and parent workshops was provided to receive their feedback on the workshops.

6. A follow-up questionnaire at the end of each group was presented to receive the participants feedback.

7. A follow-up questionnaire to the classroom faculty and parents of group participants was provided to obtain the faculty and parents' feedback.

Report of Action Taken

1. The first faculty workshop was 45 minutes and held the first month of school as part of the first scheduled faculty meeting. The first workshop outline (see appendix G) was completed and the FWOQ was presented, completed and returned to the school psychologist. A mutually agreed upon date and time was discussed for the second workshop.

2. The second faculty workshop was 90 minutes and held during the second month of school. The second workshop outline (see appendix G) was completed and the FWOQ was presented, completed and returned to the school psychologist.

3. The school secretary 10 calendar days prior to the first parent workshop sent home with the single parent students an informational letter with the date, location, time and outline for the first workshop. (see appendix AA).

4. The first two hour parent workshop was held the month following the last faculty workshop. The first workshop outline (see appendix J) was completed and the

PWOQ was presented, completed and returned to the school psychologist. A mutually agreed upon date and time was discussed for the second parent workshop.

5. The school secretary 1Ø calendar days prior to the second parent workshop sent home with the single parent students an informational letter with the date, location, time and outline for the second workshop. (see appendix BB).

6. The second two hour parent workshop was held the month following the last parent workshop. The second workshop outline (see appendix J) was completed and the PWOQ was presented, completed and returned to the school psychologist. A mutually agreed upon date and time was discussed for the third parent workshop.

7. The school secretary 1Ø calendar days prior to the third parent workshop sent home with the single parent students an informational letter with the date, location, time and outline for the second workshop. (see appendix CC).

8. The third two hour parent workshop was held the month following the second. The third workshop outline (see appendix J) was completed and the PWOQ was presented, completed and returned to the school psychologist. A mutually agreed upon date and time was discussed for the fourth workshop.

9. The school secretary 1Ø calendar days prior to the fourth parent workshop sent home with the single parent students an informational letter with the date, location, time and outline for the fourth workshop. (see appendix DD).

1Ø. The fourth two hour parent workshop was scheduled for the month following the third. The fourth workshop was not held due to the lack of parental attendance.

11. Two weeks prior to the start of the developmental group sessions this writer mailed to the divorced single parents of grades one and two a parent permission letter with a consent form (see appendix L) to be signed, dated and returned to the school psychologist in a stamped self-addressed envelope.

12. The six week developmental group sessions for grades one and two commenced the second month of school. The first and second grade outline (see appendix M) was completed.

13. The classroom faculty of group participants in grades one and two received at the end of the six weeks the PGFOQ with cover letter to complete and return to the school psychologist in one week.

14. The PGPOQ with cover letter was mailed to the parents of group participants in grades one and two in a

stamped self addressed envelope to be completed and returned in one week.

15. The PGPOQ was mailed to the non respondents in a stamped self addressed envelope the first and second weeks after the first mailing.

16. Two weeks prior to the start of the developmental group sessions this writer mailed to the divorced single parents of grades three and four a parent permission letter with a consent form (see appendix L) to be signed, dated and returned to the school psychologist in a stamped self-addressed envelope.

17. The six week developmental group sessions for grades three and four commenced the week following the last group for grades one and two. The outline for grades three and four (see appendix T) was completed.

18. The classroom faculty of group participants in grades three and four received at the end of the six weeks the PGFOQ with cover letter to complete and return to the school psychologist in one week.

19. The PGPOQ with cover letter was mailed to the parents of group participants in grades three and four in a stamped self addressed envelope to be completed and returned in one week.

20. The PGPOQ was mailed to the non respondent parents of grades three and four in a stamped self addressed envelope the first and second weeks after the first mailing.

21. Two weeks prior to the start of the developmental group sessions this writer mailed to the divorced single parents of grades five and six a parent permission letter with a consent form (see appendix L) to be signed, dated and returned to the school psychologist in a stamped self-addressed envelope.

22. The six week developmental group sessions for grades five and six commenced the week following the last group for grades three and four. The outline for grades five and six (see appendix X) was completed.

23. The classroom faculty of group participants in grades five and six received at the end of the six weeks the PGFOQ with cover letter to complete and return to the school psychologist in one week.

24. The PGPOQ with cover letter was mailed to the parents of group participants in grades five and six in a stamped self addressed envelope to be completed and returned in one week.

25. The PGPOQ was mailed to the non respondent parents of grades five and six in a stamped self addressed envelope the first and second weeks after the first mailing.

# Chapter 5

# RESULTS

## Results

The goals of this practicum were to have the school faculty and divorced single parents increase their understanding and develop strategies for implementation in promoting optimal academic and social success for children of divorced single parents. There were five objectives in the practicum. Objective one stated 70% of the single parents of each group will report their children improved academically and or behaviorally. This objective was not achieved. A summary of responses from the single parent's responses of the three groups is shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Parent Responses on the Post Group Parent Opinion Questionnaire for Academic or Behavioral Improvement

| Group | Parent Response | | | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No | Yes | No Response | |
| First | Ø | 4 | 1 | 100% |
| Second | 2 | 2 | 2 | 50% |
| Third | Ø | 4 | 2 | 100% |

As shown in Table 3 first group had zero parents responding no, 4 yes, 1 no response, for 100% improvement. Second group had 2 parents responding no, 2 yes, 2 no response, for 50% improvement. Third group had zero parents responding no, 4 yes, 2 no response, for 100% improvement. No response related to a parent not returning the post group opinion questionnaire. A total of 17 parents were mailed the opinion questionnaire.

Seven of 17 parents responded with additional remarks. All remarks were positive. Such remarks were:

"I recommend an advanced group for those children who are not hurting but need growth in expressing their feelings about a single parent family and problems."

"I think the divorce group is an excellent idea."

"I would like to know if this could be kept up for the remainder of the year."

"Even though my son has stayed the same behaviorally (no problem) he and I felt it was good for him to express his feelings in a group setting. It also allowed a nice break in the day where he was able to interact freely with others."

"I feel this is a very important area for families in divorced situations. I hope their will be more programs in the future."

Objective two stated students in each developmental group will report increased communication and coping skills. Coping skills as it related to this questionnaire were the child's ability to adjust to

the divorce in the family. This objective was met. A summary of responses from the students of the three groups is shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Student Opinion Questionnaire

| Group/Grade | Number of Students | Increased Communication | Increased Coping |
|---|---|---|---|
| One/First and Second | 5 | 5 Pa<br>5 Pe<br>Ø Te | 5 |
| Two/Third and Fourth | 6 | 6 Pa<br>6 Pe<br>Ø Te | 6 |
| Three/Fifth and Sixth | 6 | 6 Pa<br>6 Pe<br>4 Te | 6 |

Note. Increased communication is with Pa = Parent(s); Pe = Peers; Te = Teachers.

Thirteen of 17 students made additional comments. All comments were positive. Such comments were:

"I learned about divorce."

"I thought it was fun and understandable because we talked about our feelings and not good feelings."

"I think this program was good for kids who do not understand the position they are in or who are going through this."

"I thought it was fun. I liked coming out. I understand divorce now."

Objective three stated classroom faculty report their group participants improved academically and or behaviorally. This objective was achieved. A summary of responses from the faculty of the three groups is shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Post Group Faculty Opinion Questionnaire

| Group/Grade | Number of Students | Improved Academically | Improved Behaviorally |
|---|---|---|---|
| One/First and Second | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| Two/Third and Fourth | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| Three/Fifth and Sixth | 6 | 6 | 3 |

Every faculty member except grade five made additional comments. All comments were positive. Such comments were:

"All my students looked forward to the group."

"I think the group was a good experience for him. He was able to discuss some of his feelings about his parents divorce."

"I feel she needed this."

"She appeared to enjoy the sessions. She was always ready to go and seemed to take them seriously."

Objective four stated the faculty will report increased awareness of strategies in promoting optimal growth for single parent children. This objective was met for both faculty workshops. A summary of responses from the two workshops is shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Faculty Workshop Opinion Questionnaire

| Workshop | Attended/Total Faculty | Increased Knowledge |
|---|---|---|
| First | 13/13 | 85% |
| Second | 7/13 | 86% |

As shown in Table 6 the first workshop had a total of 13 of 13 faculty attended, with 85% increased knowledge. Second workshop had a total of 7 of 13 faculty attended, with 86% increased knowledge. Increased knowledge related to positively responding to possessing new strategies in working with divorced single parents and divorced single parent children in the school setting as the direct result of the workshops.

Two faculty members for both workshops responded with additional comments. Both comments were positive. The comments were:

"Thank-you for all the valuable information."

"The statistics are depressing."

"What a very interesting workshop. I truly enjoyed it. Thank-you! Divorce is such a sad situation."

Objective five stated parents in attendance at the workshop will report increase awareness of strategies for promoting optimal growth for single parent children. This objective was achieved. A summary of responses for the three parent workshops is shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Parent Workshop Opinion Questionnaire

| Workshop | P/Attendance | I/Awareness |
|---|---|---|
| First | 7 | 100% |
| Second | 5 | 100% |
| Third | 6 | 100% |

Note. P = Parents; I = Increased.

As shown in Table 7 the first workshop had a total of 7 parents, with 100% increased awareness. The second workshop had a total of 5 parents, with 100% increased awareness. The third workshop had a total of 6 parents, with 100% increased awareness. Parental increased awareness, was a better understanding of the effects of divorce on their children, and the strategies to positively work with their child's academic and or social problems.

Thirteen of 18 parents made additional remarks on the questionnaire. All remarks were positive. Such remarks were:

"Being with a group of other parents in the same or similar situations is very helpful."

"I thought this was a workshop about my son. It's good to know this is a problem for many parents."

" I am glad to see that the schools are acknowledging the trauma children experience in divorce and are working with teachers and parents."

"I feel parents need to have a similar group as the children separately and with them."

Conclusion/Discussion

During the implementation period this author logged noteworthy facts. The observations noted are discussed in relation to the five objectives. The first objective relates to the parents of group participants. Statistically the first objective was not achieved. Comments added to the questionnaire though imply the objective was met. The objective failed statistically when all parents in group two responded no to question three "Academically has your

child improved?" Two parents responded no to question four "Behaviorally has your child improved?" All negative responses received the same written response, "There wasn't a problem before the group started." Therefore, if no prior problem(s) existed no improvement was warranted, resulting in the parents responding no. Furthermore, possibly the children were not experiencing behavioral problems because they all experienced the divorce as infants. Single parenting is the norm for them.

Two parents in group one, four parents in groups two and three did not respond to the original solicitation of the PGPOQ and cover letter. One and two weeks after the first mailing PGPOQ's with cover letter were forwarded to the parents. A total of 10 additional mailings were sent. The extra mailings prompted five more completed PGPOQ's from two parents in group two and three from group three.

A parent in group one signed the parent permission letter and after the first session she telephoned this

writer to rescind permission. A summary of the phone conversation follows:

> "She felt her divorce was four years ago, presently her son was fine. She did not want him to discuss the divorce. It would upset him, he didn't need to remember it or be labeled. The purpose of the group was reiterated and this writer discussed how her son had participated and appeared to enjoy the session. The parent emphasized her son was not to attend anymore sessions."

One parent in group one and two in group two requested information about their children's participation in the group. This writer explained all information was confidential but if a life threatening situation arose they would be immediately notified. Five parents in group three contacted this author prior to commencing the fifth/sixth grade group requesting their children definitely be included. Upon completion of the group one of the five parents in a telephone conversation notified this writer her attorney will be subpoenaing this writer. The subpoena is to obtain information concerning her daughters participation to utilize in having her ex husband's visiting rights revoked. This writer has not received a subpoena, and

feels the conversation was a manipulative tactic by the parent to determine if grounds existed to deny her ex husband's visiting rights. A total of 4 of 17 parents contacted this writer for information during or after the three groups.

The second objective dealt with the students communication and coping skills in each of the developmental groups. All students in group one answered no to question two, "Do you know why we had the group?" It is felt the concept of sameness, all living with a divorced parent, as the reason for being together in the group was cognitively advanced for their chronological ages. All students in group two and four in group three responded no to question three, "Are your grades better?" The students felt their grades were good before the start of the group.

Four students in group three responded no to question four, "Are you behaving better in school?" The students felt their they were not behavior/discipline problems prior to the start of the group. All students in the first and second group responded no to question seven, "Are you talking more with your teachers about how you feel?" The students did not give any explanation for the lack of increase in communication with their teachers. The teachers did not express a

concern about the lack of increase in communication and felt the lack of increase was probably the result of the developmental levels of the children.

All students in the first and second group and four in the third group responded no to question nine, "Have you or your parent(s) read (to you) the books discussed?" The students commented their parents did not go to the library or bookstore to obtain the books because their parent(s) had too many other things to do. This could be the result of a transportation, time, financial or scheduling problem(s) for the parents.

A student in the third/fourth grade group who missed a session had his grandmother come to school, to obtain the missed session's worksheets. The student wanted to complete the worksheet at home and discuss it the next session.

All the students in the second group expressed anger that the group was ending. They wanted to be part of the next group, even though the students were older and the format similar.

Two students not participating in the groups, one in third grade the other in fifth approached this author. The third grader commented that if she could get her parents divorced could she be in the group. The fifth grader commented, her parents were just getting a

divorce, could she join the group, even though 3 of 6 sessions were completed.

Objective three participants were the classroom faculty of students in the groups. After every other student session faculty members were approached to ascertain if they needed any insight or non confidential information concerning the students. No faculty member either approached this writer or when approached requested assistance.

The fourth objective relates to the two faculty workshops. The first workshop scheduled for 60 minutes was 45 minutes, due to schedule constraints. Workshop two scheduled for 60 minutes was 90 minutes due to interest. The principal attended both workshops. Workshop one included the entire teaching staff and support services such as school counselor, librarian, secretary and physical education teacher. The librarian was the only support service personnel who attended both workshops.

The staff consists of one divorced female, two single females and 10 married. The divorced, remarried faculty member expressed support for the research with personal anecdotes. The faculty in general verbalized amazement at the national statistics for divorce and reiterated the effects of divorce on parents and

children by discussing friends, parents and siblings divorces. At the conclusion of the second workshop a third workshop was offered at a date the staff could chose. The faculty felt due to scheduling and job demands attendance at another workshop would not be possible.

During the course of the school year 3 of 13 faculty members approached this writer for further information and or assistance with students. The faculty were the librarian, school counselor and second grade teacher. The second grade teacher commented she successfully worked with two students experiencing academic difficulties in her class, from single parent homes. Previously she would have immediately referred the students to the school psychologist for evaluation.

Objective five dealt with the three parent workshops. The three workshops were scheduled for 90 minutes and each were 120 minutes. The principal and one mother attended all workshops, two mothers attended two. Two fathers attended the first workshop. Due to prior commitments the first workshop was taped for a parent at her request. A father attended workshop two who had not previously attended the first workshop. A parent during the second and third workshop expressed alot of anger toward the ex spouse. The other members

of the workshop listened, empathized and offered advice. No fathers attended the third workshop. Parents in the third workshop discussed at length how the clergy on Sunday and the faculty during the school day talk about the family only as intact or widowed. The concept of single parents caused by divorce is not acknowledged. This is probably the result of Catholic doctrine which does not recognize divorce.

A fourth parent workshop was requested by the parents of the third workshop (see appendix DD). The principal and the parent who had attended all three previous workshops showed for the fourth scheduled workshop. The principal, parent and this author decided to cancel this workshop due to poor attendance. The parent requested a copy of the fourth workshop's notes to gain further insight. The notes were copied and forwarded to the parent. Possible reasons why other parents did not attend was they forgot, the notification was sent the last day of school prior to spring break or the weather was beautiful and the adults were involved in activities with their children.

Recommendations

1. Include in the cover letter with the request for parent permission that all information discussed in the groups is confidential. It will not be shared with the parent(s) unless the school psychologist professionally deems it appropriate and necessary.
2. Replace follow up mailing of PGPOQ to non respondents with a telephone conference.
3. The school psychologist would request parent(s) of students in the groups to attend parent workshops.
4. Increase total group sessions to eight. This could further increase the possibility of student personal growth.
5. Increase the number of faculty workshops and obtain continuing education credits from the local college to act as an incentive for the teachers to attend.
6. Include announcement of parent workshops in the Sunday church bulletin and weekly community newspaper to insure reaching more single parents.

7. Offer parent workshops monthly at the same time, location and day of the week, such as 7:30 p.m., library, every first Tuesday of the month.
8. Change questions on the questionnaires dealing with improvement of academic and behavioral problems to "Prior to the group has the student experienced academic or behavior problems?" If yes, please answer part A, "Has your child improved academically or behaviorally?", if not, please go to the next question.

Dissemination

1. Inservice meeting at the school with the entire staff.
2. Inservice presentation for the school psychologists in this author's district.
3. Inservice presentation at the annual Spring, 1989, conference of the state school psychological organization.
4. Submit for presentation at the annual Spring, 1989, conference of the National Association of School Psychologists.

5. Submit for presentation at the annual Summer, 1989, conference of the International School Psychologists Association.
6. Submit for presentation at the annual Fall, 1989, conference of the National Association for the Education of Young Children.
7. Submit for presentation at the annual Fall, 1988, Ohio Catholic Schools Administrator's and Teacher's Professional Growth Conference.
8. Submit for presentation at the annual Fall, 1988, conference of the Central Ohio Teacher's Association.
9. Submit for publication to the appropriate professional journals, such as Psychology in the Schools.
10. Submit for inclusion in the ERIC system.

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# APPENDIX A

## POST GROUP FACULTY OPINION QUESTIONNAIRE

POST GROUP FACULTY OPINION QUESTIONNAIRE

PLEASE CIRCLE AND COMPLETE YOUR ANSWER:

1. Was the school psychologist available during the group sessions to assist you in helping the students? yes no
2. Was the school psychologist available after the group sessions to assist you in helping the student? yes no
3. Academically has the student improved?
4. Behaviorally has the student improved?
5. Overall did the student benefit from participating in the group? yes no
6. Would you like the school to offer a similar group next year? yes no

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

# APPENDIX B

## POST GROUP PARENT OPINION QUESTIONNAIRE

POST GROUP PARENT OPINION QUESTIONNAIRE

PLEASE CIRCLE YOUR ANSWER:

1. Was the school psychologist available if needed during the group sessions to assist you in helping your child? yes no
2. Was the school psychologist available if needed after the group sessions to assist you in helping your child? yes no
3. Academically has your child improved? yes no
4. Behaviorally has your child improved? yes no
5. Overall did your child benefit from participating in the group? yes no
6. Would you like the school to offer a similar group next school year? yes no

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

# APPENDIX C

## COVER LETTER

Dear Faculty and Parents;

This purpose of this questionnaire is to assist the school in learning more about the students who participated in the divorce groups. Your responses are important to this learning process. The answers you give will be completely confidential. Please circle the response which best resembles how you feel and complete the blanks. Please add comments on the bottom of the questionnaire which you feel were not addressed.

Thank-you for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

John P. Carlucci, M.S.

School Psychologist

# APPENDIX D

## STUDENT OPINION QUESTIONNAIRE

STUDENT OPINION QUESTIONNAIRE

PLEASE CIRCLE YOUR ANSWER:

1. Do you know why you were in the group? yes no
2. Do you know why we had the group? yes no
3. Are your grades better? yes no
4. Are you behaving better in school? yes no
5. Are you talking more with your parents about how you feel? yes no
6. Are you talking more with your classmates about how you feel? yes no
7. Are you talking more with your teachers about how you feel? yes no
8. Are you coping better now with your family situation? yes no
9. Have you or your parent(s) read (to you) the books discussed in the group? yes no
   a. How many?
10. Did you like coming to the group? yes no

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

# APPENDIX E

## FACULTY WORKSHOP OPINION QUESTIONNAIRE

FACULTY WORKSHOP OPINION QUESTIONNAIRE

PLEASE CIRCLE YOUR ANSWER;

1. Has the workshop increased your knowledge concerning divorced single parent children? yes no
2. Has the workshop increased your knowledge concerning divorced single parents? yes no
3. As a result of this workshop do you feel better equipped to work with children living with divorced single parents? yes no
4. Can you apply the workshop information into your classroom setting? yes no
5. Do you think the school has benefited from the workshop? yes no
6. How many workshops did you attend? _____
7. Would you like the school to offer more inservices on this topic? yes no

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

# APPENDIX F

## PARENT WORKSHOP OPINION QUESTIONNAIRE

PARENT WORKSHOP OPINION QUESTIONNAIRE

PLEASE CIRCLE YOUR ANSWER:

1. Did the school psychologist present specific examples to assist you in helping your child?
   yes no
2. Has the workshop increased your knowledge concerning divorced single parent children? yes no
3. Has this workshop increased your ability to positively work with your child? yes no
4. Can you apply the workshop information at home?
   yes no
5. Do you think the school has benefited form this workshop? yes no
6. Have you benefited from the workshops? yes no
7. Would you like more inservices on this topic?
   yes no

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

# APPENDIX G

# FACULTY WORKSHOP OUTLINE

WORKSHOP 1

1. Description of the practicum
2. Glossary of terms (see appendix H)
3. General information concerning divorce in the United States
4. The effects of divorce on the parent(s)
5. Bibliography (see appendix I)
6. Questions/comments

WORKSHOP 2

1. Quick review of workshop one
2. The effects of divorce on children
3. The role of the faculty and school in aiding the single parent child
4. A description of the developmental groups for grades one thru six inclusive
5. Questions/comments

# APPENDIX H

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ALIMONY --- a monetary sum one partner agrees to pay to the other for support.

ANNULMENT --- a judicial decision declaring a marriage not valid.

CHILD SUPPORT --- a monetary sum the divorced partner who does not have custodial rights agrees to pay for the care of the child.

CUSTODY --- a decision establishing which partner will keep the children and assume the major responsibility for their welfare.

DIVORCE --- a legal process which dissolves the marriage and enables both partners to remarry.

JOINT CUSTODY --- an arrangement in which children spend half their time in one home and the other half in the other home. This gives both parents equal rights and responsibilities for the children.

MARRIAGE --- a social and legal relationship between a man and a woman, making them legally responsible for their children.

SEPARATION --- a legal process which enables the husband and wife to live apart, does not break the marriage contract nor free them to remarry.

SPLIT CUSTODY --- one or more children are given to one

parent and the other child(ren) to the other parent.

VISITING RIGHTS --- specifies days, holidays, vacations and hours that children may visit the parent with whom they do not live.

# APPENDIX I

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Clay, P. (1980). The schools and single parents: Accessibility is the key. National Association of School Principal, 40-43.

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Pedro-Carroll, J. & Cowen, E. (1984). The children of divorce intervention program: An investigation of the efficacy of a school based prevention program. Journal of Divorce, 603-611.

Sonnlenshlin-Schneider, M. (1980). Children of divorce in elementary schools: Understanding process and technique. Personnel and Guidance Journal, October, 88-91.

Wallerstein, J. (1983). Children of divorce: Stress and developmental tasks. in Garmezy and Rutter (Eds.), Stress, Coping, and Development in Children (pp. 265-302), NY: McGraw Hill.

# APPENDIX J

# PARENT WORKSHOP OUTLINE

WORKSHOP 1

1. Description of the practicum
2. Glossary of terms (see appendix H)
3. General information concerning divorce in the United States
4. The role of the faculty and school in aiding the single parent child
5. Bibliography (see appendix I)
6. Questions/comments

WORKSHOP 2

1. Review of workshop 1
2. The effects of divorce on children
3. Questions/comments

Workshop 3

1. Description of developmental groups for divorced/separated/single parent children in grades one through six
2. Review the effects of divorce on children
3. The effects of divorce on parents

Workshop 4

1. Description of developmental groups for divorced/separated/single parent children in grades one through six
2. The effects of divorce on children

# APPENDIX K

## PARENT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Parent Bibliography

Adam, J. & Adam, N. (1979). Divorce: How and when to let go. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall.

Gersick, K. (1979). Fathers by choice. Pp. 307-325 in G. Levinger & O. Moles (eds.), Divorce & Separation. N.Y.: Basic Books. (Divorced men who receive custody of their children).

Hetherington, E., Cox, M. & Cox,R. (1977). Beyond father absence: Conceptualization of effects of divorce. In M. Hetherington (ed.), Contemporary Readings in Child Psychology. N.Y.: McGraw Hill.

Kohen, J., Brown, C. & Feldberg, R. (1979). Divorced mothers: The costs and benefits of female family control. Pp. 228-245 in G. Levinger & O. Moles (eds.), Divorce & Separation. N.Y.: Basic Books.

Longfellow, C. (1979). Divorce in context: It's impact on children. Pp. 288-306 in G. Levinger & O. Moles (eds.), Divorce & Separation. N.Y.: Basic Books.

Prokop, M. (1986). Divorce happens to the nicest kids. Warren, OH.: Alegra House.

Wallerstein, J. (1980). Surviving the breakup: How children and parents cope with divorce. N.Y.: Basic Books.

# APPENDIX L

# PARENT PERMISSION LETTER

Dear Parent;

St. Matthias school is in the process of organizing group sessions on the topic of divorce and the effects on children. The groups for grades one and two will begin on . Research shows that many children whose parents are in the process of divorce or are divorced experience stress, neglect their school work and change their behavior because of feelings and fears about this change in their lives. The purpose of this group is to have children: 1. realize other schoolmates have similar experiences and understand their own feelings; and 2. learn skills to express their feelings in constructive ways.

This group will meet for six sessions of approximately 45 minutes each. These sessions generally benefit participants academically and socially. If you agree to your child being included in this group please sign the attached form and send it to me at the school as soon as possible. If you have any questions please call me at 267-5481 or 268-3030.

Sincerely yours

John P. Carlucci, M.S.
School Psychologist

I agree that may participate in the sessions dealing with divorce. Signature: Date:

# APPENDIX M

## GROUP FOR GRADES ONE AND TWO

Grades One and Two

Duration: Six consecutive weeks

Size: Approximately eight students

Time: Forty-five minutes

Session 1

1. Purpose/rules of group (see appendix N)
2. Group activity -- Getting to know you (see appendix O)

Session 2

1. Review rules
2. Glossary of terms (see appendix H)

Session 3

1. Review rules
2. Group activity on communication skills (see appendix P)
3. Bibliography (see appendix Q)

Session 4

1. Group activity on family change (see appendix R)

Session 5

1. Group activity on what is happiness (see appendix S)

Session 6

1. Review weeks one to five
2. Group discussion utilizing the SOQ (see appendix D)

# APPENDIX N

## PURPOSE/RULES

## Purpose/Rules

Purpose:

1. Learning more about yourself and others
2. Learning positive ways to deal with the changes in your home life

Rules:

1. One person talks at a time
2. Be yourself
3. Do not criticize others
4. Keep all group discussions confidential
5. Participate: do not monopolize the conversation; be an active listener; and if you wish not to talk do not interrupt the group

For classroom use only (Bradford, 1982).

# APPENDIX O

## GETTING TO KNOW YOU

# Getting to Know You

YOUR NAME

Find someone in the group who: Name

1. Loves animals
2. Is living with his/her mother
3. Loves to eat vegetables
4. Never gets into trouble at school
5. Often gets into trouble at school
6. Is living with his/her father
7. Does homework with the TV on

# APPENDIX P

## COMMUNICATION

Communication

Discussion:

1. When a man and a woman get a divorce do they divorce their children?
2. Why do people get a divorce?
3. Did I do anything to cause the divorce?
4. How does divorce change my life?
5. Would my parents get back together again if I did anything different?

For classroom use only (Bradford, 1982).

# APPENDIX Q

## FIRST AND SECOND GRADE STUDENT BIBLIOGRAPHY

## Student Bibliography

Cain, B. and Benedek, E. (1976). What would you do? A child's book about divorce. Indianapolis: Youth Publications. (This primary picture book presents common reactions to divorce.)

Hazen, B. (1978). Two homes to live in. N.Y.: Human Sciences Press. (This primary picture book gently handles the facts and feelings of the divorce.)

Helmering, D. (1981). I have two families. Nashville: Abington Press. (Patty describes her feelings about her parents divorce and new living arrangements, for ages 6-9.)

Lisker, S. and Dean, L. (1976). Two special cards. N.Y.: Harcourt. (Written for children ages 4-8, the story depicts a girls emotions before and after the divorce and concentrates on the positive aspects of two happy homes.)

Prokop, M. (1986). Kid's divorce workbook. Warren, Ohio: Alegra House Publishers. (This helps children feel better about themselves as they become more aware of their positive aspects and inner strengths.)

Prokop, M. (1986). Divorce happens to the nicest kids. Warren, Ohio: Alegra House Publishers. (A self help book for children ages 3-15, explaining divorce in a reassuring manner.)

For classroom use only (Bradford, 1982).

# APPENDIX R

## CHANGES

Changes

List two things that have changed in your family:

1.

2.

List two things that have changed for you:

1.

2.

What changes, if any, do you like?

Why?

What changes do you not like?

Why?

# APPENDIX S

## HAPPINESS

Happiness

List what you enjoy doing?

List what your mother and father do to make you happy?

Mother:

Father:

Name two things you can do to make your mother and father happy?

Mother: 1.

2.

Father: 1.

2.

For classroom use only (Bradford,1982).

# APPENDIX T

## GROUP FOR GRADES THREE AND FOUR

Grades Three and Four

Duration: Six consecutive weeks

Size: Approximately eight students

Time: Approximately forty-five minutes

Session 1

1. Purpose/rules of group (see appendix N)
2. Group activity -- Getting to know you (see appendix O)

Session 2

1. Review rules
2. Glossary of terms (see appendix H)

Session 3

1. Review rules
2. Group discussion on communication skills (see appendix P)
3. Bibliography (see appendix U)

Session 4

1. Group activity -- What bothers me (see appendix V)

Session 5

1. Group activity -- Letter to dad or mom (see appendix W)

Session 6

1. Review weeks one to five
2. Answer any questions
3. Present and complete questionnaire (see appendix D)

# APPENDIX U

## THIRD AND FOURTH GRADE STUDENT BIBLIOGRAPHY

## Student Bibliography

Fradin, D. (1978). Bad luck Tony. New Jersey: Prentice Hall. (A hard working divorced mother becomes upset when her son brings home a dog. Tony's grandfather comes to the rescue.)

Prokop, M. (1986). Divorce happens to the nicest kids. Warren, Ohio: Alegra House Publishers. (A self help book for kids.)

Prokop, M. (1986). Kid's divorce workbook. Warren, Ohio: Alegra house Publishers. (A guide to help children understand divorce.)

# APPENDIX V

## WHAT BOTHERS ME

## What Bothers Me

Check the problems which bother you. Number four of your checked problems which are the most bothersome.

Losing my temper
Being shy
Being teased
Worrying
Nightmares
Being criticized
Not having anyone to tell my troubles to
Nothing to do at home
Getting too much attention at home
Not getting enough attention at home
Having people talk about me
Too many chores at home
Ashamed that my parents are divorced
Being angry at the parent I live with
Wanting to run away from home
Being left alone too much

For classroom use only (Bradford, 1982).

# APPENDIX W

## LETTER TO DAD OR MOM

Letter to Dad or Mom

Sometimes the parent you do not live with feel sad they do not see you everyday. Write a letter or draw a picture to make that parent feel better/happy.

For classroom use only (Bradford, 1982).

# APPENDIX X

## GROUPS FOR GRADES FIVE AND SIX

Grades Five and Six

Duration: Six consecutive weeks

Size: Approximately eight students

Time: Approximately forty-five minutes

Session 1

1. Purpose/rules of group (see appendix N)
2. Group activity -- Getting to know you (see appendix O)

Session 2

1. Review rules
2. Glossary of terms (see appendix H)

Session 3

1. Review rules
2. Group discussion on communication skills (see appendix P)
3. Bibliography (see appendix Z)

Session 4

1. Group activity -- New Rules (see appendix Y)

Session 5

1. Group activity -- What Bothers Me (see appendix V)

Session 6

1. Review weeks one to five
2. Answer any questions
3. Present and complete questionnaire (see appendix D)

# APPENDIX Y

## NEW RULES

NEW RULES

List Five rules in your home. Star any rule you want changed.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Change the stared rules.

Briefly state for each changed rule how you think your parent will feel towards the new rule.

Briefly state why you think your parent has the rule(s) you wish to change.

For classroom use only (Bradford, 1982).

# APPENDIX Z

## FIFTH AND SIXTH GRADE BIBLIOGRAPHY

## Student Bibliography

Okimota, J. (1979). My mother is not married to my father. N.Y.: Putnam Sons. (Two sisters six and 11 years old attempt to adjust to their parent's divorce.)

Prokop, M. (1986). Divorce happens to the nicest kids. Warren, Ohio: Alegra House Publishers. (A self help book for kids.)

Prokop, M. (1986). Kid's divorce workbook. Warren, Ohio: Alegra house Publishers. (A guide to help children understand divorce.)

# APPENDIX AA

## ANNOUNCEMENT

SCHOOL BASED STRATEGIES FOR DIVORCED, SEPARATED & SINGLE PARENTS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN

DATE: Dec. 1

TIME: 7:30 - 9 P.M.

PLACE: SCHOOL LIBRARY

Research shows that many children whose parents are in the process of divorce/separation or are single experience stress, neglect their school work and change their behavior because of feelings and fears about this change in their lives.

Presentation Outline

-- description of developmental groups for divorced/separated/single parent children in grades one through six

-- general information on divorce in the United States

-- the role of the school in helping single parent children

-- the effects of divorce on parents

-- the effects of divorce on children

# APPENDIX BB

## ANNOUNCEMENT TWO

SCHOOL BASED STRATEGIES FOR DIVORCED, SEPARATED & SINGLE PARENTS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN

DATE: Tuesday Jan. 19

TIME: 7:30 - 9 P.M.

PLACE: SCHOOL LIBRARY

Research shows that many children whose parents are in the process of divorce/separation or are single experience stress, neglect their school work and change their behavior because of feelings and fears about this change in their lives.

Presentation Outline:

-- description of developmental groups for divorced/separated/single parent children in grades one through six
-- general information on divorce in the United States
-- the role of the school in helping single parent children
-- the effects of divorce on parents
-- the effects of divorce on children

# APPENDIX CC

## ANNOUNCEMENT THREE

SCHOOL BASED STRATEGIES FOR DIVORCED, SEPARATED & SINGLE PARENTS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN

DATE: Tuesday March 1

TIME: 7:30 - 9 P.M.

PLACE: FACULTY LOUNGE

Research shows that many children whose parents are in the process of divorce/separation or are single experience stress, neglect their school work and change their behavior because of feelings and fears about this change in their lives.

Presentation Outline:

-- description of developmental groups for divorced/separated/single parent children in grades one through six

-- the effects of divorce on parents

-- the effects of divorce on children

# APPENDIX DD

## ANNOUNCEMENT FOUR

SCHOOL BASED STRATEGIES FOR DIVORCED, SEPARATED & SINGLE PARENTS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN

DATE: Tuesday April 12

TIME: 7:30 - 9 P.M.

PLACE: SCHOOL LIBRARY

Research shows that many children whose parents are in the process of divorce/separation or are single experience stress, neglect their school work and change their behavior because of feelings and fears about this change in their lives.

Presentation Outline:

-- description of developmental groups for divorced/separated/single parent children in grades one through six

-- the effects of divorce on children